Coordination and Consolidation of Agency Transportation

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The coordination or consolidation of the transportation operations of social service agencies is a strategy that has substantial intuitive appeal. Coordination has often been proposed as a means of eliminating duplication and waste, saving money, serving unserved groups, and expanding services. Statutory and regulatory obstacles to coordinating agency transportation systems exist and are discussed in this paper. They can be surmounted, as shown in demonstration projects, but the coordination process is more costly, complex, and time consuming than had been imagined. The intended benefits of coordination will probably be achieved only if certain preconditions are met and if precise coordination strategies are followed. Coordination should be viewed as one of a variety of means for improving the mobility of the transportation disadvantaged.

Efforts to coordinate transportation services are receiving a great deal of attention these days. From such efforts, it is apparent that coordination can sometimes--but not always--be beneficial.

It is very important to determine the reasons for coordination at the outset of planning any coordinated transportation system and to communicate these reasons to all parties that will be involved. Coordinated transportation systems presumably create vis-à-vis demonstrable benefits uncoordinated. specialized, particularized transportation. Generally, the following reasons are put forth as rationales for coordinating transportation services: (a) to eliminate the overlap and duplication of service (to the same population groups in the same geographic area), (b) to fill gaps in service, (c) to save money by eliminating duplication and by achieving economies of scale usually reserved for larger operations, and (d) to improve and expand service. Although all of these reasons apply generally as advantages of coordinating transportation services, each reason applies to greater or lesser degree depending on (a) the geographic and demographic characteristics of the area served (e.g., urban versus rural), (b) the type of social service provided (e.g., a multiservice agency that serves several different client groups or a singlepurpose agency that provides a discrete service to one categorical client group), and (c) the size and scope of the transportation service provided (e.g., a large fleet of vehicles serving many clients at different times of the day and/or week for different purposes or one vehicle serving a few clients at the same time each day for one purpose).

This paper will discuss a few of the many issues involved in coordination. We will examine preliminary observations from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) coordinated transportation demonstration, review the results of a study of statutory and regulatory barriers for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and discuss some overall observations derived from other field work.

TRANSPORTATION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

This section summarizes some of the evaluation results for the first 14 months (June 1977 through July 1978) of a two-year demonstration program sponsored by the Office of Human Development Services (OHDS) of HEW (<u>1</u>). Thus, the tentative and interim nature of these comments must be emphasized. More conclusive findings will be available next year.

The program's purpose is to show that coordinating or consolidating existing transportation services at the local level can enhance both the quality and quantity of human service transportation; its overall goal is to effect national policy and programming.

The design of the transportation demonstration program reflects the OHDS premises that (a) existing transportation services provided to OHDS populations through federal, state, and local sources can be coordinated at the local level with minimal incentive monies and (b) coordination or consolidation of transportation activities will increase efficiency (by reducing duplication and total systems costs) and effectiveness (by reducing fragmentation and improving access to services). Thus, the program's specific objectives are to develop practical approaches to coordination at the local level, explore and test service delivery systems and organizational methods for coordinated transportation, develop and test methods for coordination with existing public and private transportation providers, and identify statutory, regulatory, and administrative barriers to coordinated transportation.

Five demonstration grants were awarded in June 1977 to these agencies:

 Northwest Arkansas Human Services, Inc., Fayetteville, Arkansas (site A);

 Grand Rapids Transit Authority, Grand Rapids, Michigan (site B);

 Community Action Council of Howard County, Maryland, Inc. (site C);

4. Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, Inc., Jacksonville, Florida (site D); and

5. Westchester County Department of Transportation, Westchester County, New York (site E).

Overview of the Demonstration Sites and Projects

The five grantees were selected from 48 applicants that had responded to a public notice of a competitive award. The guidelines for the applicants screened out agencies that had already begun to coordinate transportation services in their communities. In selecting applicants that had no previous experience, OHDS was working with the most difficult--and probably the most typical--type of local agencies that may undertake coordination attempts in the future.

The projects provide a range of coordination concepts (see Table 1). The clearinghouse concept, Project Respond in Fayetteville, allows the participating agencies the greatest amount of flexibility and requires the least amount of commitment. In

Table 1. OHDS transportation demonstration projects: coordination concepts.

Proposed Concept	Site					
	A	B	С	D	E	
information and referral Clearinghouse for ridesharing and	х	х			x	
time sharing	х					
Coordination of operations	10.00	х		х		
Consolidation of vehicle operations			х	x	Х	
Purchase of transportation services				x	X	
Centralized dispatching		х	х	x		
Centralized maintenance	x	x	х	х	X	
Centralized purchasing	X	x	х	x		
Planning assistance					X	
Funding assistance	х					

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Grand Rapids, certain functions (e.g., dispatching) are consolidated, but most trips are still provided by agencies that act independently of one another. The local transit authority is the grantee. The Urban-Rural Transportation Alliance (UTA) in Howard County has achieved the greatest degree of consolidation; it has completely taken over the transportation budgets and vehicles of the participating agencies to provide services as an independent entity. In Jacksonville, several coordination concepts are being approached simultaneously by Ride, Inc., including the consolidation of several agencies' re-sources and services, coordination with others, and purchase-of-service agreements with still others. The local transit authority has been involved in planning the sytem and is expected to take part in operations during the second project year. The Westchester Coordinated Transportation Project (WCTP) is incrementally consolidating human service agency operations and eventually plans to implement a countywide paratransit system that will serve clients as well as elderly and handicapped persons who may not be social-service-agency clients. The text table below gives further details on funds awarded by OHDS for coordination of transportation services.

Element	Funding (\$	
Lowest site award		
First year	45	949
Second year	52	285
Highest site award		
First year	99	279
Second year	114	992
Total demonstration funds to sites	803	900
Technical assistance funds		
HEW	389	435
DOT	156	000
Evaluation funds	331	331
Overall demonstration costs to date	1 680	666

Preliminary Findings from HEW Demonstration

Achievements

The outstanding accomplishment of the demonstration projects to date is that they have managed to overcome many institutional, administrative, and perceptual barriers and have begun providing transportation service despite the problems involved. To be sure, the full potential of coordination or consolidation has yet to be realized. For example, although the unit costs for transportation should decrease after coordination (2), that has not been the case in four of the projects. Some projects have reduced their original unit costs and increased their productivity since beginning coordinated operations, although not to a level below that existing before coordination.

Coordination

It was easier for the projects to coordinate agencies than vehicles or trips. The two consolidated systems showed the greatest progress toward their coordination objectives.

Progress Toward Demonstration Objectives

In general, the objectives of the OHDS coordinated transportation demonstration program have not been met at this time, although substantial progress has been made in understanding the problems of and barriers to coordination. For the most part, coordinated transportation efforts have not been more efficient or effective than uncoordinated transportation operations. Consequently, the program has not yet demonstrated practical approaches to coordination. Furthermore, greater coordination with existing public and private transportation providers has not been achieved. Analysis of demonstration activities shows a need for substantial technical assistance at the local level. Thus, the premise that minimal OHDS funds are required to stimulate and implement coordinated transportation appears doubtful according to the data now available.

Coordination Process

The overriding theme emerging from the findings of the first year's efforts is that coordination is a more costly, complex, difficult, and time-consuming process than had been imagined, largely for the following six reasons.

1. It took much longer to develop the coordinated systems than had been expected. Although all five grants were awarded on June 1, 1977, transportation operations did not begin for 8-12 months. Delays of this magnitude had not been expected. In addition, it should be noted that the grantees had actually begun working toward an operational coordinated transportation system 5-6 months before the OHDS grants were awarded (and this was with the aid of the OHDS technical assistance contractor). In view of the activity before the grant award, a more accurate assessment of the time required to start up these coordinated transportation systems would be 12-17 months.

2. All five projects had major difficulties with staffing at every level. Not until four months after the grant award did all five projects have directors on board; this delayed administrative, planning, and development activities. By far the most difficult staffing area for all projects was that of drivers and dispatchers. Since driver salaries (an operational expense) could not be paid out of the OHDS grant, which was primarily for administrative purposes, the projects were dependent on staff pooled from participating agencies (in two sites) or the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) or other public employment programs (in two other sites).

3. Few proposed participating agencies were actually participating in transportation operations at the end of the first project year. At three of the five demonstration sites, fewer than half of the agencies listed in the grant proposals were actually participating in any project activities other than advisory or policy board meetings. More participation in providing or purchasing transportation has been expected. Major contractual difficulties were encountered in two areas: (a) legal commitments from agencies to carry out previously agreed-on coordinating activities and (b) contractual commitments from major federal and state funding sources. Without signed contracts, many of the agencies were not legally or financially able to participate. Thus, implementation of transportation operations and related coordination activities (e.g., dispatching, maintenance, and purchasing) were delayed.

4. Vehicle maintenance proved to be a serious problem for consolidated systems. Both consolidated projects experienced vehicle maintenance problems related to the condition of vehicles pooled from participating agencies. Repair and maintenance of these vehicles added to the first-year costs for both projects.

5. Licensing and certification procedures were more complex and time consuming than expected. Generally, social-service-agency transportation services are not regulated by any state entity because they do not carry the general public and do not charge fares. However, even though no money is collected directly from passengers, payment structures necessary for coordinated operations may be considered a form of fare, depending on state law. As a result, two grantees found it necessary to apply for common-carrier licenses and one had to apply for an invalid-coach permit in order to carry nonambulatory persons. In each case, considerable time was spent, and no resolution was reached by the end of the first project year.

6. The federal capital assistance process was too lengthy for delivery of vehicles. Early in the first project year, each project recognized the need for capital equipment to supplement the vehicles that were pooled or shared (depending on the method of coordination attempted) at the five demonstration sites. The bidding, licensing, and procurement procedures associated with obtaining capital assistance through the Urban Mass Transportation Act are complex. Even projects linked with transit authorities were confronted with unforeseen problems as part of the capital equipment procurement process. In fact, the OHDS two-year demonstration grants will have terminated before the delivery of vehicles that could expand the projects' services in two of the projects.

Transportation Operations

Each demonstration project has shown improvements in the short time that services have been available. In general (but not always), coordination has increased and the number of riders served has increased. Costs per unit of service have also increased, but not much. Current trends suggest that improvements might continue.

Despite these definite achievements, room for improvement exists in other areas. Some projects are serving large numbers of riders; others are running nearly empty vehicles. Providing reliable, highquality service has sometimes been a problem because of inexperienced dispatchers and because of assortments of vehicles in various states of repair. Compared with transportation services before coordination, there has not been much success in reducing. the unit transportation costs of participating agencies, although some participants at some sites are already receiving monetary benefits from coordination. Compared with similar paratransit operations across the country, two of the demonstrations have done remarkably well in providing efficient services within a short time. These same two projects, the consolidated systems, showed the highest scores to date on almost all performance measures.

Costs Before and After Coordination

Costs to agencies participating in the demonstrations more often increased than decreased after coordination (the reverse was expected). The increase was apparent even after adjustment for inflation. Decreases in costs to participating agencies occurred only at sites that had consolidated operations.

Comparative Performance Indicators

In August 1978, trip costs ranged from \$2.88 per trip to \$29.24, as shown in Table 2. The costs per trip are acceptable for two of the five projects; the others should be improved. Costs per vehicle mile were generally good. Productivities (passengers per vehicle mile and passengers per vehicle hour) were generally low. Overall, the projects did not obtain as much mileage per month from their veTable 2. Operating statistics of OHDS coordinated transportation demonstration projects as of August 1978.

Measure	Lowest Value	Highest Value	Accepta	ble Range ^a
			Low	High
Efficiency measures				
Cost per one-way passenger trip (\$)	2.88	29.24	1.50	3.50
Cost per vehicle mile (\$)	0.60	1.96	0.40	1.00
Cost per vehicle hour (\$)	11.88	44.91	9.00	18.00
Load factor (%)	_	-	15	35
Operating ratio		-	0.25	1.0
Effectiveness measures				
Passengers per vehicle mile	0.07	0.32	0.20	3.0
Passengers per vehicle hour	1.54	4.12	4.0	18.0
Annual passengers per service area				10.0
population	<u>) — 1</u>	-	3.0	20.0
Other descriptors			5.0	20.0
One-way passengers per month	354	11 141	1000	8000
Monthly vehicle miles per vehicle	1321	1847	2500	7500

⁸The derivation of this range is discussed elsewhere (<u>1</u>).

hicles as other systems did, but one demonstration (Jacksonville) was operating at a high level of passengers per month.

Possible Elimination of Major Problems Remaining

Three general problems have yet to be resolved at many of the sites: (a) finding continued funding for the projects, (b) reducing the unit costs, and (c) obtaining additional resources (including vehicles and drivers). These problems are obviously interrelated and revolve around one issue: Can the projects achieve enough financial success to attract additional and continued support? That has not yet happened at any site. Whether it will in the time remaining is uncertain. Equally uncertain is the possibility of overcoming specific problems at the individual sites.

Possible Changes in Performance Measures

The performance measures of the projects (that is, efficiency and effectiveness) should improve during the second year. In some cases, the improvement might be dramatic. The many political and organizational problems encountered by the projects left little time for actual transportation operations. Transportation services should improve once they become the focus of attention and activity. Thus, although the projects have not yet achieved the demonstration program's objectives, more should be accomplished during the second year.

Summary

Since the evaluation of the second year's activities is not yet complete, and since three of the five projects are entering into a third year of HEM demonstration assistance, some of the observations about the first year's results may change when the demonstration period is viewed as a whole. Whether coordination of transportation services is beneficial in the long run remains to be demonstrated.

STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BARRIERS TO COORDINATION

Many social service agencies may be unwilling to consider interagency coordination (for transportation purposes) because they perceive such activity to be inconsistent with the policy or statutory mandate of their federal and/or state funding source (3,4). Since these perceptions (which may or may not be accurate) color social-service-agency response to coordination attempts, it is important that persons planning, implementing, and operating the projects have a good working knowledge of the federal and state statutes and regulations governing the programs to be coordinated.

Analysis of the federal statutes that govern the programs that are known to spend the largest amounts of money on transportation--Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, as amended [sections 2, 3, 5, 8, 13c, and 16b(1) and b(2)]; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Health Centers Construction Act of 1963, as amended (Developmental Disabilities Program); Social Security Act (Title XX and Title XIX); Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended; and Community Services Act of 1974, as amended, including the Head Start and Community Action Programs--shows that the kinds of barriers that arise include funding (nonfederal match, funding ceiling, and planning) and services (eligibility, geographic coverage, method of payment, fees or contributions, and service restrictions) (5).

Nonetheless, none of these barriers constitutes an overwhelming obstacle to coordination; they merely require time and effort to circumvent. Coordination can be achieved, but there is a need for considerable interaction between planners and operators of coordinated transportation systems and state and local administrators of the federal programs early in the planning process. This interaction can help answer questions regarding (a) the feasibility of coordinating with a particular program, (b) the time and effort required to obtain the participation of a program, and (c) the costs versus the benefits (to the system) of coordinating with certain programs. Furthermore, interaction is required to resolve the following issues related to the program components.

Funding

The Nonfederal Match

Key questions about nonfederal matching funds include the following:

1. Who is required to meet the nonfederal cash match? Is it the state, the locality, or a combination of state and locality (and what ratio for each)? Can the match be met by a local provider (rather than the locality)?

2. Who is required to meet the in-kind match? Can it be a local service provider or administering agency or a combination of the two?

3. Can the in-kind or cash match be provided through private donations or only through public sources?

4. How is the in-kind match valuated?

5. Are there possibilities of waivers of all or part of the nonfederal match under certain conditions (i.e., Community Action Program waivers for multijurisdictional projects and poverty areas)? How would such waivers affect the agency's participation in a coordinated transportation system?

Title XX Funding Ceiling

Planners and operators who wish to obtain Title XX funding should thoroughly investigate the state's relationship to its Title XX ceiling, because that relationship will affect the possibility of using Title XX funds for coordinated transportation. This issue should be discussed with the appropriate officials of the state Title XX agency before obtaining participation commitments from local agencies that expect such funding. If the state is near or at its ceiling, the key questions are the following:

1. Have Title XX funding sources been (or will they be) transferred to another title of the Social Security Act (e.g., Title XIX or Medicaid) to pay for certain services?

2. To which title have the funds been transferred? Is transportation funded under the title? Can the funds be used for coordination services?

3. If Title XX funds can be obtained, for how long can such funding be expected? (States approaching their ceiling are often unwilling to undertake new program initiatives that may not be sustainable in a year or two.)

Planning

Planners and operators of coordinated transportation systems should first determine whether the state planning and budget processes (for the programs being considered for participation in the system) are linked or whether the budget process precedes the planning process. Because of the nonfederal matching requirements imposed on federal-state programs, the budgetary process is often the point at which service priorities are established. Thus, the state budget process could be the key point of entry for a coordinated transportation system seeking funding through any of the federal-state formula grant programs.

If the coordinated system wishes to be considered for funding as a service project (as opposed to an ancillary service), the state plan process must be investigated with the state agency so that an application can be made to the appropriate funding source at the most propitious time.

Other key information regarding planning includes the answers to the following questions:

1. Are there state (or local) planning or budget requirements over and above the federal requirements?

2. What impact do these requirements have on the participation of the state or local agency in a coordinated transportation system?

3. How do such requirements affect the development or operations of the coordinated system?

Services

Eligibility

In most cases, the eligibility issue can be dealt with by negotiating purchase-of-service contracts with the program in question. However, in the case of consolidation, where the system depends on the pooling of agency vehicles and other resources (manpower, funds), methods of overcoming certain limitations posed by eligibility requirements must be investigated with the appropriate state or local agencies. Examples include limiting vocational rehabilitation services to current program recipients and limiting Community Action Program and Head Start services to low-income groups.

Either the state Title XX agency or the service provider (under a purchase-of-service contract) may determine eligibility. Because of the staff time and expense involved (especially for individual determinations), a coordinated transportation system that receives Title XX funds may wish to have the state make all eligibility determinations. However, such policies are at the state's option, and the local provider must generally conform to them. Therefore, consideration should be given to state determination policies early in the planning stages of a coordinated system to allow for adequate staff and time for such activities. The options regarding eligibility determination should be discussed with the state Title XX agency, because the option that has been adopted by a state on any one of the determination issues can have an impact on the development and operation of coordinated transportation services.

Geographic Coverage

When a program for participation in a coordinated or consolidated transportation system is considered, careful attention should be given to the geographic boundaries in which the program must operate. The answers to the following questions will facilitate effective planning. Does the program operate within specific jurisdictional boundaries (cities, counties)? Under what conditions can these boundaries be crossed for service provision? If the boundaries cannot be crossed, coordination can still be implemented in some cases. Some possible alternatives include (a) a purchase-of-service contract for a specified area within the larger areas served by the system, (b) time sharing or ridesharing among two or more agencies operating vehicles within one jurisdiction (e.g., county), and (c) a mixture of consolidation (pooling of vehicles) in one jurisdiction with purchase of service in areas outside the program jurisdiction. (This alternative depends on a system that has the vehicles and other resources necessary to accommodate such a mix.)

The barrier that will be most difficult to overcome in this regard arises when the coordinated system serves an area smaller than the service area covered by the program agency. In some cases, the program will not be willing (or able) to purchase a service or pool vehicles for only part of its target population.

Method of Payment for Service

This issue is crucial to the effective development of a coordinated system, not only because the way a program pays for service could obviously have financial implications for the system, but also because planning and operational delays and legal problems can occur if a coordinated system attempts to comply with certain payment methods.

Fees or Contributions

Some questions about fees and contributions include the following: Is the collection of fees or fares permitted? Is the collection of fees or fares permitted or required for only certain members of the client population (e.g., Title XX)? Are voluntary contributions encouraged for client payment for service? What are the limits of such voluntary activity (e.g., are "suggested" amounts of contributions permitted)? Can the program agency purchase bulk tickets for transportation-service clients or is that considered cash assistance and prohibited? Are the fee policies of the program agency consistent with those of other agencies participating in the system?

Service Restrictions

The restrictions placed on service delivery under the various programs should be examined in terms of their implications for barriers to coordination. For example, Section 13c (the labor- and wage-protection requirements for Sections 3, 5, and 18 of the Urban Mass Transportation Act) should be studied for its impact on the coordination of (a) mass transit with social-service-agency transportation (e.g., union versus nonunion social-service-agency drivers and dispatchers, the displacing of transit personnel by social-service-agency volunteers or part-time personnel as drivers and dispatchers) and (b) "hands-on" service required for certain types of severely physically or mentally impaired riders. In addition, the Section 13c clearance process (through the U.S. Department of Labor) is a lengthy one that could affect the implementation or start-up of a coordinated system. Consequently, clearance timing should be taken into account during the planning process.

State rehabilitation agencies are required to develop and maintain written policies for the vocational rehabilitation services they provide or support, including transportation. These policies should be carefully reviewed and discussed with appropriate state agency personnel in terms of their implications for coordinated transportation. State policies and procedures for transportation provided under the Developmental Disabilities Program, although not required by federal regulation, may exist and should also be reviewed.

As noted earlier, Title XX does not permit federal financial participation for medical or remedial care (except for family planning) unless such care is an integral (but subordinate part) of another Title XX service under the state plan and "not available to the individual under the state's Title XIX Medicaid plan" and the individual or provider is not eligible for payment under Title XVII (Medicare). This restriction virtually prohibits coordination between Titles XIX and XX transportation services. Furthermore, it affects the inclusion of programs other than Title XX in a coordinated system, since many clients of the federal-state social service programs (e.g., aging, rehabilitation, and mental health) are eligible for both Title XX and Medicaid services. It is essential that this issue be carefully investigated with both the Title XX and Medicaid state agencies.

COORDINATION STRATEGIES

The difference between successful and unsuccessful coordination attempts often depends on the ability of the implementers to specifically identify and use appropriate coordination strategies. Clear understandings of which strategies are being used for which purposes are crucial.

The major types of coordination strategies are to reduce actual expenses on capital equipment, overhead, and direct costs; to increase amount of service to specific areas or populations; to increase efficiency through lower unit costs, increased labor productivity, and improved vehicle utilization; and to improve provision of services (effectiveness) through greater productivity, increased service quality, better financial management, greater local political support, and other means. The choice of a particular strategy is dependent on the problems that have been identified in the service area (6).

Each of the strategies is, of course, subject to further substrategies in implementation. For example, overhead expenses could be reduced by consolidating the following kinds of functions: dispatching, bookkeeping, systems management, scheduling, and financial applications. (Consolidation here probably means releasing some persons from jobs they currently perform and expecting others to work harder at those jobs.)

The benefit of identifying particular strategies is that it changes coordination from a general concept into a specific plan. When someone says, "I want to reduce direct costs by lowering system maintenance charges," it is very easy to see whether this has been accomplished or not. Making the objectives specific helps make them possible to achieve.

ASSESSMENT

The technical criticisms against coordination as a panacea are compelling. The basic selling point for coordination has been that it saves money (7). In fact, this is not in general true--it is only in very special circumstances that coordination costs less. Coordination is more costly and time consuming and less universally applicable (8) than any of us had initially anticipated. There are substantial front-end costs of planning and administration that generally will not (or cannot legally) be borne by any of the participants. There are certain agencies that have not made their transportation expenses explicit for the valid reason of not being able to include a line item in their budget for transportation. Other agencies have developed "deals" to get clients to their destinations at less than full costs. Such agencies cannot benefit from a system that makes all costs explicit and fully chargeable. To force other agencies into a formal purchasing structure reduces their flexibility for special trips. In addition to such problems, it also appears that (a) coordination between social service agencies and existing public and private transportation providers will be more difficult than previously assumed and (b) substantial federal aid will be necessary to fund the staff and technical expertise needed to make coordination work.

Coordination can work extremely well in specific instances. Such instances must include the following kinds of conditions:

1. Consolidation of the transportation programs of some but not all of the social service agencies in an area;

2. The existence of one lead agency that has substantial cash or cash potential to handle problems such as vehicle maintenance and cash flow;

3. Adequate billing and accounting procedures;

4. An available outside authority able to fund the initial planning, start-up, and technical assistance;

5. Commitment and involvement of local government officials; and

6. Strong and skilled project management.

When these requirements are met, cost savings through coordination are possible. Coordination could then also generate other benefits, among them releasing certain agencies from the responsibility of providing transportation, allowing them to purchase services instead; increasing the quality (especially the reliability) of transportation services; and stimulating the coordination of nontransportation services by human service agencies.

CONCLUSION

Coordination is a useful concept in some but not all

instances. In order for the potential cost savings in transportation operations to be realized from coordination, substantial planning and administrative expenditures are necessary. However, because of certain fiscal structures, volunteer contributions, or special service requirements, some agencies will never benefit from coordinating their operations with those of other service providers, whereas coordination will enable others to substantially increase the amount of services they deliver.

When we began operating specialized transportation systems, we had a definite objective in mind. It is possible to become so wrapped up in the intricacies of implementation techniques--like coordination--that we lose sight of the original objective. Coordination is only one of the many steps along the way to achieve a broader goal--increased mobility for those who are not able to provide their own transportation. It is time we refocused our attention on ways of increasing mobility.

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